

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1044

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 1053

PARIS FOR MELONE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ML, US

SUBJECT: MINISTER DEFENSE DOUKARA, MALI'S "EMINENCE GRISE"?

1. SUMMARY. EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY INDICATES THAT MINISTER OF DEFENSE, INTERIOR AND SECURITY, KISSIMA DOUKARA, IS THE MOST POWERFUL MEMBER OF THE ELEVEN-MAN MILITARY COMMITTEE WHICH RULES MALI COLLECTIVELY. IF A CRISIS SHOULD EVER OCCUR THREATENING THE PRESENT REGIME, DOUKARA WOULD BE THE MAN TO WATCH. EMBASSY DOES NOT FORESEE SUCH A CRISIS NOR IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE OF A POLITICAL CONSPIRACY ON DOUKARA'S PART. THE BASIS FOR THIS EVALUATION FOLLOWS:

2.FRENCH AMBASSADOR, LOUIS DALLIER WHO ENDED A SIX-YEAR ASSIGNMENT HERE IN MARCH OFTEN EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT MINISTER OF DEFENSE, INTERIOR AND SECURITY DOUKARA IS THE MOST INTELLIGENT AND AMBITIOUS MEMBER OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WITH STRONG INFLUENCE ON THE QUOTE VACILLATING PRESIDENT UNQUOTE, COLONEL MOUSSA TRAORE.
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THE HEAD OF A SIX-MAN FRENCH POLICE ADVISORY GROUP TOLD

AN EMBASSY OFFICER RECENTLY THAT DEFENSE MINISTER DOUKARA AND SECURITY CHIEF, TIEKORO BAGAYOKO, ARE CLOSE ALLIES AND THAT THEY WORK HAND-IN-GLOVE TOGETHER. IN FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF THIS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP, AMBASSADOR MCGUIRE WAS PRESENT AT THE AIRPORT WITH BAGAYOKO AND DOUKARA JUST BEFORE THE LATTER'S DEPARTURE FOR THE U.S. LAST FEBRUARY WHEN DOUKARA WAS GIVING LAST MINUTE INSTRUCTIONS TO BAGAYOKO. WHILE IT WAS CLEAR THAT BOTH MEN WERE CLOSE FRIENDS, IT WAS ALSO CLEAR THAT DOUKARA WAS GIVING ORDERS AND THAT BAGAYOKO RECOGNIZED DOUKARA AS HIS SENIOR. BOTH DOUKARA AND BAGAYOKO ARE MEMBERS OF THE RULING MILITARY COMMITTEE. EMBASSY HAS ALSO OBSERVED THAT THE CHIEF OF THE GENDARMERIE, MAJOR ABDOULAYE DIALLO, WHOSE ORGANIZATION IS UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY, IS A CLOSE COLLABORATOR OF DOUKARA AND HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN DESIGNATED BY DOUKARA AS EMBASSY'S CONTACT ON DROUGHT AND FMS MATTERS WHEN DOUKARA IS ABSENT ON TRIPS. THUS, IF THERE IS A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOUKARA, BAGAYOKO, AND DIALLO-AND THIS APPEARS TO BE THE CASE- THESE THREE MEN CONTROL THE PREPONDERENT FORCES IN THE COUNTRY, THAT IS, THE GENDARMARIE, THE ARMY, AND ALL SECURITY PERSONNEL.

3. HOWEVER, EMBASSY HAS NO INDICATION WHATSOEVER THAT DOUKARA OR HIS COLLABORATORS HAVE ANY POLITICAL AMBITIONS OR THAT ANY OF THEM HAVE OPERATED INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY OUTSIDE THE DIRECTIVES OF PRESIDENT TRAORE AND THE MILITARY COMMITTEE. STILL, IT IS COMMON GOSSIP IN BAMAKO AMONG BOTH THE FOREIGN COMMUNITY AND MALIANS THAT DOUKARA'S INFLUENCE IS PERVASIVE. (HE IS ALSO DROUGHT RELIEF COORDINATOR HANDLING DISTRIBUTION OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF DONOR GRAIN SHIPMENTS). FOR EXAMPLE, A MALIAN ENGINEER RECENTLY SOUGHT THE ASSISTANCE OF AN EMBASSY OFFICER TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH DOUKARA IN THE BELIEF THAT THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE COULD ENSURE HIS APPOINTMENT TO A MORE SENIOR JOB IN ANOTHER MINISTRY. (THE EMBASSY OFFICER, OF COURSE, DECLINED.)

4. WHILE DOUKARA AND SECURITY CHIEF BAGAYOKO GIVE EVERY CONFIDENTIAL

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INDICATION OF BEING PRO-WESTERN IN THEIR POLITICAL OUTLOOK AND HAVE ENCOURAGED U.S. ASSISTANCE TO MALI, THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO OTHER POWERFUL MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WHO ARE NOT PRO-AMERICAN, BUT WHO ARE ATTENTIVE TO THE ARAB, SOVIET, AND CHINESE. THEY ARE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, LT. COLONEL YOUSSEF TRAORE, WHO REPLACES THE PRESIDENT AS ACTING CHIEF OF STATE WHENEVER THE LATTER IS ON TRIPS ABROAD AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER;

LT. COLONEL CHARLES SAMBA SISSOKO, WHO HAS BEEN AN OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, MOST RECENTLY IN A HARSH SPEECH BEFORE THE 29TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LAST SEPTEMBER. BOTH TRAORE AND SISSOKO ARE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY OFFICERS OF LONG EXPERIENCE. WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, THE CHIEF OF STAFF, OF THE MALIAN ARMED FORCES, MAJOR BOUGOURI SANGARE, APPEARS TO BE THE CHOSEN LIAISON OR PROTOCOL LINK WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. THE EMBASSY HAS NO INFORMATION ABOUT HIS POLITICAL VIEWS. SELF-EFFACING AND STIFF IN PUBLIC, SANGARE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE THE KIND OF PERSON WHO WOULD EVER BE A RIVAL TO DOUKARA. THE DEGREE OF DOUKARA'S POPULARITY WITHIN THE ARMY IS UNKNOWN ALTHOUGH HE IS REPORTEDLY POPULAR WITH THE TROOPS. THE SOVIETS AND THE CHINESE ARE THE PRINCIPAL FOREIGN SUPPLIERS OF EQUIPMENT TO THE MALIAN ARMY AND MANY MALIAN OFFICERS AND/OR ENLISTED MEN HAVE OR ARE RECEIVING THEIR TRAINING IN THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA. UNTIL RECENTLY, THE CHINESE HAD A TANK TRAINING TEAM OPERATING IN MALI. THE SOVIETS STILL MAINTAIN MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PERSONNEL ATTACHED TO THE MALI AIR FORCE AND THE ARTILLERY AND ARMORED UNITS IN NEARBY KATI. WHAT ALL OF THIS IMPORTS FOR SOVIET/ CHINESE INFLUENCE IN THE ARMY IS UNKNOWN. DOUKARA ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS ENERGETICALLY SOUGHT TO OBTAIN MILITARY ITEMS IN THE U.S. (MAINLY TRUCKS, C-130'S, AND OTHER NON-LETHAL HARDWARE) WHICH FAR EXCEEDS MALI'S MODEST HALF MILLION DOLLAR FMS BUDGET AND WHICH MALI CAN NOT FINANCE ITSELF. HE HAS ALSO REQUESTED MILITARY TRAINING IN THE U.S. FOR MALIAN OFFICERS.

5. EMBASSY DOES NOT EXPECT NOR DO WE HAVE ANY INDICATION OF A THREAT TO THE RULE BY THE MILITARY COMMITTEE UNDER PRESIDENT MOUSSA TRAORE. HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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DOUKARA AND HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATE, BAGAYOKO, APPEAR TO BE WELL PLACED AND CAPABLE OF INFLUENCING AND PROBABLY CONTROLLING ANY CHANGES THAT TAKE PLACE IN THE PRESENT RULING STRUCTURE. MCGUIRE

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